

1 **METHOD AND KIT FOR MODIFYING ARTICLES OF CLOTHING**

2 **FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

3 This invention relates to a method and kit for temporarily
4 modifying various types of articles of clothing, e.g. shoes,
5 belts and the like, to match user created colors and patterns;
6 particularly to a kit containing a plurality of adhesive backed
7 printable cloth covers releasably adhered to a liner sheet and
8 software for interfacing with preexisting computer software and
9 computer peripherals.

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11 **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

12 Computer systems having the ability to function in
13 accordance with the now well known "desktop publishing" have
14 been provided for a number of years as the power and capability
15 of computers and printers have increased. While such systems
16 vary somewhat, they each typically rely upon a computer having
17 a processor unit and supporting a display monitor together with
18 a printer. In many instances, the printer is preferably a
19 color printer to provide a more professional looking output of
20 printed media. Desktop publishing software may be obtained
21 from a number of software providers which is used by the
22 computer to create images at the user's selection upon the
23 display monitor which are then passed to the printer for a hard
24 copy of the selected design. A great deal of power and
25 flexibility is provided in such systems including the ability
26 to store a plurality of image elements for selection and

1 inclusion into a given to-be-printed image. In most instances,
2 the computer system utilizes a mouse device and a menu-driven
3 software arrangement in which much of the work done to assemble
4 the image on the display is accomplished by simple "point and
5 click" mouse operation.

6 With the advent of computer sketch pads, digitizers,
7 scanners, digital video cameras and still cameras, computer
8 images now combine many of the traits of drawings, paintings,
9 photographs and photocopies, yet are easy for most people to
10 create. Examples of computer-creation of images are disclosed
11 in U.S. Pat. Nos. 4,635,132, 4,687,526, 4,923,848, 5,009,626,
12 5,109,281, 5,148,196, 5,343,386, and 5,623,581, the disclosures
13 of which are incorporated herein by reference.

14 Thus, such systems are capable of providing a virtually
15 endless variety of so-called hard copy output. While
16 originally such systems were used entirely to print images upon
17 paper, in recent years it has been found equally advantageous
18 to print images upon a peel-off sticker bearing media. Thus,
19 sheets of paper shaped in accordance with standard sheet sizes
20 are supported adhesively upon an impervious carrier similar to
21 conventional peel-off labels or stickers. As these sticker or
22 label sheets are passed through the printer, selected images
23 are placed upon the stickers or labels at the appropriate
24 location by the desktop publishing software.

25 Not surprisingly, practitioners in the art have been quick
26 to utilize this powerful type of software together with

1 improved faster and more powerful computers to solve various
2 problems and undertake various business activities as well as
3 various amusing, educational or entertaining activities.

4 Business activities generally include time savers such as
5 adhesive labels. Adhesive labels are well known in the art and
6 various types of laminated label constructions have been
7 employed to provide a user with labels that can be attached to
8 various types of substrates such as documents, pages in a
9 magazine, message boards and the like. Typically, such
10 laminated constructions are made of two plies, one of which is
11 die-cut to form a plurality of labels while the other acts as
12 a carrier sheet to which the die-cut sheet is peelably secured
13 so that the die-cut labels can be removed from the carrier
14 sheet and applied to a substrate.

15 In order to be applied to a substrate, an adhesive is
16 applied to the back of each label. The adhesive is of a type
17 that releases from the carrier sheet while remaining on the
18 label. Various types of barrier coatings have also been
19 provided on the carrier sheet to allow release of the labels
20 with sufficient adhesive on their backs allow the labels to be
21 applied to a substrate.

22 Some examples of educational and entertainment activities
23 which utilize sticker type media include, U.S. Pat. No.
24 5,524,932 issued to Kalisher sets forth a STICKER-BASED METHODS
25 OF MAKING A PERSONALIZED CHILDRENS' STORY BOOK using preprinted
26 books with blank areas on various pages. A transparent sticker

1 having personalized text thereon is applied to the blank areas
2 to create a personalized story line in the book.

3 U.S. Pat. No. 5,556,339 issued to Cohen sets forth a
4 COMPUTER PICTURE TOY FOR INFANTS AND VERY YOUNG CHILDREN which
5 provides audio-visual stimuli directed to the creation of a
6 picture in response to input by an infant or very young child.

7 U.S. Pat. No. 5,623,581 issued to Attenberg sets forth a
8 DIRECT VIEW INTERACTIVE PHOTO KIOSK AND IMAGE FORMING PROCESS
9 FOR SAME having a photo booth coupled to a computer for
10 combining the subject's image with a plurality of background
11 images and for printing multiple copies thereof.

12 U.S. Pat. No. 5,487,010 issued to Drake, et al. sets forth
13 a BUMPER STICKER PRINTING MACHINE having an arcade-style
14 enclosure, a computer board and program, a monitor and touch
15 screen and means for feeding a succession of vinyl bumper
16 sticker material to a printer. The customer puts money into the
17 machine and then selects a bumper sticker style which is then
18 printed.

19 It is also known in the prior art to create various types
20 of appliques which may be applied to articles of clothing
21 and/or accessories. The appliques are generally either
22 permanently attached to the article of clothing or they may be
23 temporary attached via buttons, hook and loop, snaps etc.

24 U.S. Patent 6,110,558 issued to Billingsly et al. teaches
25 clothing bearing retroreflective applique that has a binder
26 layer onto which a retroreflective layer is disposed. The

1 retrorreflective layer includes a layer of optical elements and
2 a metal reflective layer, and a binder layer that includes a
3 thermoplastic copolymer which contains carboxyl groups.

4 U.S. Patent 6,161,224 to Tuetken teaches a decorative
5 applique that is removably affixed to a garment including
6 collars, pockets and accessories (such as hats, pocketbooks and
7 shoes). The removable applique is adapted for mounting at
8 multiple locations for any one of a number of selected
9 appliques with a spring action clip similar to those in
10 children's berrettes that can be selectively affixed to the
11 outer surface of a garment. The clip having a pivotal
12 elongated attaching bar that enable s the clip to be fastened
13 to either the garment collar or the user's hair and fashion
14 accessories.

15 U.S. Patent No. 6,367,088 to Bergeman teaches a garment
16 embellishment having no attachment means. The embellishment
17 may take the place of a more formal necktie, bolo tie, or scarf
18 and may be easily transported in a pocket, purse or briefcase
19 so that it is immediately available to help dress-up casual
20 clothing. The embellishment may be removably attached to
21 clothing by use of double-sided adhesives, hook and loop
22 fasteners, pins, snaps, button loops or other buttoning
23 attachments.

24 Other applique patents known to Applicant are U.S. Design
25 Patent 428,687 illustrating a lighted sport design on an
26 athletic shoe and U.S. Design Patent 428,687 illustrating a

1 shoe applique.

2 While the foregoing described prior art devices have
3 improved the art and in some instances enjoyed commercial
4 success, there remains nonetheless a continuing need in the art
5 for evermore improved, amusing, interesting and entertaining
6 features to utilize newly developed powerful computers for
7 enhancing everyday life.

8 Therefore what is needed in the art is a method and kit
9 which allows these exciting and popular methods of image
10 creation to be incorporated for the customizing articles of
11 clothing, e.g. shoes, belts, handbags, hats and the like. The
12 kit should be simple to use by young and old, with minimal
13 instruction and supervision, and should interface with a
14 standard computer and peripherals to match or create colors
15 and/or patterns which may be easily applied to various types of
16 articles of clothing. The printable cloth covers should be
17 releasable from the articles of clothing, so that the printed
18 cover may be removed from the clothing at any time and replaced
19 with a different printed cover.

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1 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

2 The objectives are accomplished in accordance with the
3 invention by the provision of a kit containing precut adhesive
4 backed printable cloth covers releasably adhered to a liner
5 sheet and software adapted for interfacing with preexisting
6 computer software and computer peripherals for modifying
7 various types of articles of clothing adapted for receiving the
8 printable cloth covers.

9 In operation, a computer is operatively coupled to a
10 printer and a monitor and includes input devices such as a
11 keyboard and mouse in addition to peripheral devices such as a
12 scanner or digital camera and a color printer. A CD-ROM disk
13 is loaded into the computer which bears software adapted for
14 interfacing with desktop publishing type operating software
15 housed within the processor unit of the computer. The
16 interaction provided by the software allows the user to input
17 colors and/or patterns from the peripheral devices or select
18 various standard design elements for printing upon peel and
19 stick type printable cloth laminate sheets using the color
20 printer. The interfacing software may further provide a
21 preview display in which a selected article of clothing is
22 displayed having the selected design placed thereon. The
23 printable cloth laminate includes a releasable backing sheet
24 which can be removed from the printable cloth to expose a layer
25 of pressure sensitive adhesive. The printed cloth can be
26 attached to a portion of the selected article of clothing

1 allowing the article of clothing to be customized to the users
2 needs. The covers are positioned on the backing sheet in a
3 adjacent relationship having a suitable precut shape and size
4 to approximate a portion of the article of clothing, for
5 example a foot strap on a standard pair of slide, sandal or
6 mule type shoes. The covers are removed from the backing sheet
7 to expose the pressure sensitive adhesive. The exposed
8 pressure sensitive adhesive is adhered to the surface of the
9 article of clothing to create a bond between the cover and the
10 clothing. The covers may be easily customized and printed for
11 application to the article of clothing to suit a particular
12 function or activity. The construction of the covers allow a
13 first cover to be easily removed or a second cover to be placed
14 directly over the top of a first cover where modification of an
15 existing customized article of clothing is desired.

16 By utilizing the aforementioned method and kit, a single
17 set of clothing can be easily and quickly personalized to suit
18 a variety of occasions.

19 Accordingly, a primary objective of the instant invention
20 is to teach a laminated sheet of printable cloth containing a
21 plurality of removable precut cloth covers which can be passed
22 through a standard ink applying print mechanism and thereafter
23 be peeled away from a backing sheet and applied to an article
24 of clothing.

25 Another objective of the instant invention is to teach a
26 method for modifying articles of clothing to match user-created

1 colors and/or patterns.

2 Yet another objective of the instant invention is to teach
3 a method for using a computer operatively coupled to a monitor
4 and input devices such as a keyboard and mouse and peripheral
5 devices such as a color printer to create printed cloth covers
6 adapted for customizing articles of clothing.

7 Still another objective of the instant invention is to
8 teach a method of inputting colors and patterns into a computer
9 using peripheral devices such as a scanner or digital camera
10 and a color printer and utilizing a software adapted for
11 interfacing with desktop publishing type software to position
12 the colors and patterns on a precut laminated printable cloth
13 which can be used to customize articles of clothing.

14 Other objectives and advantages of this invention will
15 become apparent from the following description taken in
16 conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein set forth,
17 by way of illustration and example, certain embodiments of this
18 invention.

19 The drawings constitute a part of this specification and
20 include exemplary embodiments of the present invention and
21 illustrate various objectives and features thereof.

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1 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

2 FIG. 1 sets forth a perspective view of a computer system
3 having a desktop publishing system stored therein together with
4 the present invention game software being installed in a CD-ROM
5 format;

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7 FIG. 2 sets forth an exemplary display of selected
8 articles of clothing prior to customization;

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10 FIG. 3 sets forth a display of a selected image designs
11 which may be chosen from a plurality of designs to be printed
12 onto a printable cloth sticker for decorating articles of
13 clothing;

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15 FIG. 4 sets forth a display showing the selected article
16 of clothing together with the selected designs applied thereto;
17 and

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19 FIG. 5 sets forth a perspective view of a shoe having a
20 printed cloth cover secured thereto.

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1 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

2 FIG. 1 sets forth a perspective view of a computer system
3 running under the control of a desktop publishing type software
4 of conventional fabrication and generally referenced by numeral
5 10. Computer system 10 is further fabricated in accordance
6 with conventional fabrication techniques and includes a
7 processor unit 11, a monitor 12 having a display screen 15
8 together with a keyboard 13. For purposes of illustration, an
9 image 40 is displayed upon screen 15. In further accordance
10 with conventional fabrication techniques, computer system 10
11 includes mouse 14 operatively coupled to processor 11 in a
12 conventional manner. A printer 20 which, in its preferred
13 fabrication, comprises a color printer is operatively coupled
14 to processor unit 11 and includes a stock input 21 and a
15 printed sheet output 30.

16 In accordance with the present invention, a sheet of blank
17 printable cloth laminate 22 having die cut sections for
18 peel-off covers 23 is shown being inputted to printer 20. Also
19 shown in FIG. 1 is a sheet of printable cloth laminate stock 22
20 having passed through printer 20 and having received images 32
21 upon the peel-off cover cutout 23 portions thereof. While the
22 peel-off covers 23 are preferably constructed from a cloth type
23 material other materials well known in the art suitable for
24 passing through a printer may be utilized including, but not
25 limited to, papers, textured papers, embossed papers or
26 suitable combinations of paper and cloth.

1 In operation and in accordance with the present invention,
2 a CD-ROM disk 17 is inserted into a drive input 18. The
3 software supported upon CD-ROM 17 forms the operational
4 software of the present invention by which the clothing
5 accessory customization is carried forward. Once CD-ROM 17 is
6 loaded within processor unit 11, computer system 10 is ready
7 for operation of the present invention. In the preferred
8 embodiment of the present invention, inputs to processor unit
9 11 are provided using keyboard 13 and/or mouse 14 to display a
10 selected shoe image 40 (FIG. 2) upon display screen 15.
11 Alternative methods of providing inputs to the processor well
12 known in the art may also be utilized, e.g. digitizers, digital
13 tablets and the like. Thereafter, inputs are provided to
14 processor 11 which toggle the display image upon display screen
15 15 between the article of clothing display containing shoe
16 image 40, design display 41 containing a user-created image 42
17 (FIG. 3), and a preview display 43 containing output image 44
18 (FIG. 4). Inputs are also provided to copy and paste, insert,
19 download and import an image into the design display screen 41.
20 The images may be inserted or copied from clip-art, downloaded
21 from an internet connection, or imported from peripheral
22 devices well known in the art including but not limited to
23 scanners 34, copiers, digital cameras, and the like. The user
24 then operates mouse 14 to manipulate and/or alter the user
25 image 42 as desired for eventual application to an article of
26 clothing corresponding to the type of clothing article

1 displayed in the article clothing display image 40 on the prior
2 screen.

3 Thereafter and as is described below in FIGS. 2, 3 and 4,
4 the user having selected an article of clothing and a user-
5 created design to be used on printable cloth laminate
6 applicable to the article of clothing, implements a print
7 cycle. In accordance with the software on CD-ROM 17, the print
8 operation of printer 20 under control of processor 11 is
9 formatted to correspond to the size and location of various
10 ones of said blank peel-off covers 23 on blank laminate
11 printable cloth sheet 22. As printer 20 processes blank sheet
12 22, images such as image 32 are printed upon the peel-off
13 covers 23 of the laminate sheet. Once the desired printed
14 covers have been obtained, the user may then apply them to the
15 selected article of clothing to provide an aesthetically
16 enhanced and customized clothing for any occasion.

17 FIGS. 2, 3 and 4 set forth sequential displays appearing
18 upon display screen 15 (FIG. 1) in carrying forward the
19 above-described operation of the present invention to produce
20 peel-off covers 23 having a user-created design which may be
21 applied to a selected article of clothing. More specifically,
22 referring to FIG. 2 display screen 15 shows an article of
23 clothing 40 illustrated herein as a shoe which may be selected
24 by conventional selection means such as name input or pull-down
25 menu using keyboard 13 or point and click operation of mouse
26 14. The article of clothing type may be selected from CD-ROM

1 17 which is constructed and arranged to contain a wide variety
2 of articles of clothing which may include but should not be
3 limited to shoes, belts, hats and purses, or an article of
4 clothing may be downloaded from an external source such as an
5 internet connection.

6 Referring to FIG. 3 display screen 15 illustrates design
7 display including a user-created image 42. The user may select
8 and alter the user-created image as desired for printing upon
9 a blank cover 23 for application to a selected article of
10 clothing. Once again, in the preferred embodiment of the
11 present invention, mouse 14 (seen in FIG. 1) is utilized to
12 select a particular image from among design images contained on
13 CD-ROM 17. Alternatively, an image may be inserted into
14 screens 39, 41, 43 from various means well known in the art
15 capable of communicating with a computer, for example an image
16 may be imported from a peripheral device or downloaded from the
17 internet.

18 FIG. 4 sets forth a display 43 which appears upon display
19 screen 15 having the selected article of clothing image 40
20 (FIG. 2) shown together with selected user image 42 (FIG. 3).
21 The ability of the present invention system to provide a
22 display of the article of clothing along with its selected
23 user-created design images allows the user to "preview" the
24 aesthetic effect of utilizing a printed cloth cover bearing the
25 user-created design image upon the article of clothing. If the
26 user prefers to relocate the user-created design image 42, the

1 user is able to click upon image 42 using mouse 14 (seen in
2 FIG. 1) and "drag" design image 42 to a different location upon
3 the article of clothing image 40. Alternatively, the user may
4 reverse the operation and return to display 41 of FIG. 3 and
5 select or import an alternate design.

6 If the user elects to continue and print the cloth covers
7 23, the user inputs a print command to processor unit 11 (seen
8 in FIG. 1) and loads a blank sheet of printable cloth stock 22
9 into printer 20 (FIG. 1). The result of the selection process
10 and the previewing of the combined displays of the selected
11 article of clothing and the selected design is communicated to
12 printer 20 from processor 11 (FIG. 1) to initiate the printing
13 process. As described above, a blank sheet of printable cloth
14 laminate stock (sheet 22 in FIG. 1) is processed within the
15 printer to provide a plurality of peel-off covers 23 bearing
16 selected image 42. The user may then peel-off each cover in
17 the manner shown in FIG. 1 and apply the self-adhesive cover 23
18 to the intended surface of an article of clothing. In this
19 manner, the article of clothing may be greatly enhanced in
20 appearance by a plurality of images supported upon printable
21 cloth material and adhering to the accessory upon various
22 surfaces thereof. In the preferred fabrication of the present
23 invention, the adhesive used in the peel-off cover material
24 provides a releasable adhesive which adequately adheres to the
25 clothing accessory surface while being releasable or peelable
26 for easy removal and replacement by a different cover.

1 FIG. 5 sets forth a perspective view of one type of an
2 article of clothing, e.g. various shoes 50 constructed in
3 accordance with conventional fabrication techniques. In
4 accordance with the invention, shoes 50 have received at least
5 one self-adhesive printable cloth cover 23. In further
6 accordance with the present invention and using the process
7 described above, the covers 23 bear selected images thereon.
8 For purposes of illustration, cover 23 is shown peeled upwardly
9 at portion 24 thereof to illustrate the removal of the present
10 invention covers for replacement by other covers or to return
11 shoes 50 to their initial appearance.

12 What has been shown is a method and kit for producing
13 printed cloth covers for various types of articles of clothing
14 in which the user is presented with a series of displays
15 facilitating choice of an article of clothing structure
16 together with a plurality of designs each capable of being
17 selected and printed upon one or more peelable self-adhesive
18 covers. In accordance with an important aspect of the present
19 invention, the computer software provides for display of the
20 article of clothing structure having the selected cover images
21 placed thereon. As a result, the user is able to preview the
22 resulting appearance of the clothing accessory choice and the
23 selected designs for the cover in combination.

24 All patents and publications mentioned in this
25 specification are indicative of the levels of those skilled in
26 the art to which the invention pertains. All patents and

1 publications are herein incorporated by reference to the same
2 extent as if each individual publication was specifically and
3 individually indicated to be incorporated by reference.

4 It is to be understood that while a certain form of the
5 invention is illustrated, it is not to be limited to the
6 specific form or arrangement herein described and shown. It
7 will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various
8 changes may be made without departing from the scope of the
9 invention and the invention is not to be considered limited to
10 what is shown and described in the specification.

11 One skilled in the art will readily appreciate that the
12 present invention is well adapted to carry out the objectives
13 and obtain the ends and advantages mentioned, as well as those
14 inherent therein. The embodiments, methods, procedures and
15 techniques described herein are presently representative of the
16 preferred embodiments, are intended to be exemplary and are not
17 intended as limitations on the scope. Changes therein and other
18 uses will occur to those skilled in the art which are
19 encompassed within the spirit of the invention and are defined
20 by the scope of the appended claims. Although the invention
21 has been described in connection with specific preferred
22 embodiments, it should be understood that the invention as
23 claimed should not be unduly limited to such specific
24 embodiments. Indeed, various modifications of the described
25 modes for carrying out the invention which are obvious to those
26 skilled in the art are intended to be within the scope of the

1 following claims.

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